



THIS WEEK IN IRAQ

The Official Newsletter of the Multi-National Force - Iraq

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December 24, 2007

Best Friends on the Battlefield

FOB KALSU — With their strong sense of smell and their immeasurable loyalty, the highly trained military working dogs (MWD) in the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, are proving to be essential in the fight against terrorism.

Military working dogs first entered the United States armed services in March 1942. Today, the dogs are still providing support to the troops on the battlefield.

A single dog can search more area in less time than an entire company could do, said Staff Sgt. Charles Graves, a dog handler with 241st Military Police Detachment, Fort Meade, Md.

“By using the dogs, you are leaving your shooters to other aspects of the mission, rather than having them go out to start a search capacity,” Graves said.

Knowing the commands taught by the dog handler, the MWDs search for improvised explosive devices, weapon caches and other devices meant to harm Coalition forces and local citizens.

“They’re a good deterrent for any terrorist activity,” Graves said.

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Udi, a United States military working dog stationed at Forward Operating Base Kalsu, poses for the camera after he completes his daily training, Dec. 25. Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Amanda McBride.

‘Partnership Day’ strengthens Iraqi, U.S. relationship

CAMP TAJI — Iraqi Army Soldiers and U.S. Soldiers from Task Force XII found they have a lot in common, specifically regarding aviation, when they met here for “Iraqi Partnership Day”, Dec. 11.

“The main goal of this day is to continue to improve the relationship between the U.S. and Iraqi militaries,” said Col. Timothy J. Edens, commander of Task Force XII and an AH-64 Apache pilot. “It’s important for us as aviators to have a strong relationship with our Iraqi counterparts.”

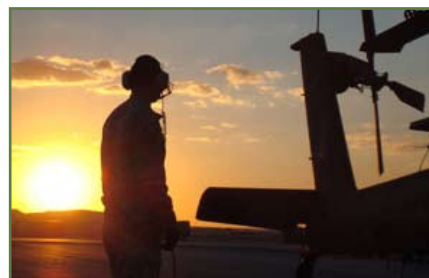
The cooperative relationship with Iraqi forces began with 1st Air Cavalry Brigade (ACB) and grew throughout the course of

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Displaced families returning to al Bata

FORWARD OPERATING BASE

HAMMER — When 12 displaced families returned to al Bata, the Soldiers of Troop A, 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, were there with their Concerned Local Citizen (CLC) partners to welcome them back with food and water Dec. 12.

With the help of local leaders, Soldiers and members of the CLCs in Khargulia delivered food and water to citizens in al Bata, al Hamidat and Khargulia.

Abu Amas, leader of the CLCs in Khargulia, stressed the importance of the families returning to the area to see how much the area has improved since they were forced to leave.

“With 12 families in al Bata coming back into the area, it is important that we welcome them with gifts for their return,” Abu Amas said. “They look forward to working with Coalition forces and see now that the leaders of this area can provide for their neighbors.”

Several sheiks from each area came out to support the mission and help ensure that the food went to the families that were the most in need.

“We are so grateful for the food today

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Basra Provincial Governor Muhammad Al-Wa'ili shakes hands with Basra Operations Center commander Gen. Mohan al-Furaiji in front of Iraqi National Security Advisor Muwafaq al-Rubaie at the formal ceremony to hand over security responsibility from British

Iraq takes control of Basrah

BASRA — Iraqi Provincial Authorities assumed security responsibilities for Basra province here Sunday.

Taking another positive step in Iraqi self-reliance, Basra became the ninth province to meet the joint conditions agreed upon by the Government of Iraq and Multi-National Force-Iraq.

GOI and MNF-I work to find out when a region is ready for transfer based on security resources, proficiency of regional government and the ability of MNF-I to support the region if needed.

It also demonstrates that Basra is building a capable and self-sufficient police and military force designed to handle security situations when they arise, or seek assistance from the national government, according to a Joint Statement by British Chargé d'Affaires Patricia A. Butenis and

Gen. David H. Petraeus, commanding general, Multi-National Force-Iraq.

The people of the province can also celebrate that unification is occurring on many levels, and the central and provincial governments are working together. Iraqi Security Forces in Basra have sustained their own security for four months now. Basra is the ninth of Iraq's eighteen provinces transferred to provincial authorities under control of the province's governor.

Iraq's prime minister announced the provincial transfer plan in June 2005, and in a historic ceremony on July 13, 2006 Muthanna was the first to transfer.

The transfer of provincial security responsibility is particularly significant, because it includes the city of Basra, the

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Hospital Visit



2007 Wrap-up



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